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ABSTRACT

The production and distribution of telecourses for higher education are examined in three papers prepared as background materials for a roundtable discussion sponsored by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. In the first paper, James J. Zigerell reviews the following considerations in designing a television-based course of study for a national market: (1) the problem of combining discrete program units with instructional materials and organizing them to achieve measurable instructional goals: (2) the characteristics of the adult students who make up the largest market for telecourses: (3) the types of telecourses needed to meet market demand: (4) the major problems involved in planning and designing telecourses: (5) production costs: and (6) future trends. Next, Thomas W. Hobbs discusses the history and objectives of the Florida Community College Television and Radio Consortium and examines its efforts to locate, select, and adapt appropriate materials. Finally, Dee Brock traces the growth of the popularity of telecourses, explains the reorganization of the Public Broadcasting System (PBS), and examines its projected role in providing a national delivery system for telecourses geared toward adult learning. The paper also discusses the potential role of a national organization of two-year colleges that use telecourses in the planning and operation of the delivery system. (JP)

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ORGANIZING TELECOURSE USERS:

A Roundtable Discussion

American Association of Community and Junior Colleges
One Dupont Circle N.W., Suite 410, Washington, D.C. 20036

November 3, 1980

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American Association of Community and Junior Colleges

INTRODUCTION

These papers are to assist participants in preparing for a roundtable discussion November 3 on how best to provide a voice for colleges that are major users of telecourses. A roster of participants is included.

Participants will discuss the needs of user colleges, consortiums of user colleges, the needs of colleges that are both major users and producers, and the ways that user colleges can help the new PBS service, PTV3, be most effective. Roundtable participants will be asked to advise the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges how it can best assist user colleges in speaking to producers, broadcasters, and policy makers about their needs.

A report of the roundtable discussion and recommendations will be prepared by the AACJC staff and shared with participants and others on request.

The Association appreciates the contributions of the authors of the background papers and the time that will be donated by the roundtable participants in the consideration of the above questions. We appreciate also the financial assistance we have received from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Public Broadcasting Service in support of the roundtable.

Roger Yarrington
Vice President
AACJC

American Association of Community and Junior Colleges

Roundtable
November 3, 1980
Washington, D.C.

Organizing Telecourse Users

AGENDA

1. Welcome - introductions

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   Remarks - Edmund Gleazer, AACJC
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2. Statements of interest in user college concerns

   Remarks - Douglas Bodwell, CPB
   Bill Reed, PBS

3. Brief summary of major points in background papers

   Remarks - James Zigerell, AACJC
   Thomas Hobbs, Florida Consortium
   Dee Brock, PBS

4. Discussion

   a. What are the needs and concerns of: user colleges?
      user consortiums?
      producers who are major users?

   b. How can users assist PTV-3?

   c. Should user colleges and consortiums be organized so they can speak more effectively to producers, broadcasters, policy makers?

   d. If so, how should they be organized?

5. Recommendations

   a. What, if anything, should AACJC do?

   b. Recommendations for other organizations, agencies?

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Producing Telecourses for a National Market

A Background Paper

AACJC Roundtable

November 3, 1980

prepared by

James J. Zigerell

Director

AACJC Task Force on the Uses of Mass Media for Learning

Producing Telecourses for a National Market: A Background Paper

by James Zigerell

At quick glance, the problems and issues of producing a marketable credit telecourse do not seem too different from those of producing a marketable college textbook. All the publisher need do is determine - with as much assurance as such determinations can be made - that there is a market sizable enough to warrant the large investment required nowadays to cover costs of authorship, expert advice, attractive layout and design, physical production, promotion, and marketing.

All this sounds simple enough. But, as any publisher will attest, it really is not so simple. In the well-established world of textbook publishing, and even given the fact that professors have long since abandoned their former opposition to using texts prepared by professors elsewhere, competition is keen, run-away best sellers are rare, and the market is capricious.

In the world of telecourse production and distribution, the risks are far greater, as indeed, some seasoned publishers of textbooks and other educational materials who have taken the plunge into telecourse production and distribution have, and are still, discovering. First of all, the market is harder to define and predict. Then, what is designed and distributed is not a neatly warehoused, discrete, relatively tangible product stored between the hard or soft covers of a book. Rather, what is offered for sale is a "system," a composite of learning and motivational materials and strategies, some components delivered in non-conventional ways, others via video, audio, and, at times, media like newspapers and computers. The standard textbook strikes a prospective user as an adjunct to the classroom activities he or she shapes and prescribes; a telecourse, particularly one of those designed by two-year community college producers, can make a prospective user uneasy in that it seems a prescription for

a total learning process, a surrogate for both teacher and classroom. Thus, those who have had no experience with telecourse use may conclude that a telecourse is a matter of all or nothing. That is, once an institution has adopted a telecourse, the teacher assigned to it is left with little of any significance to add on his own.

This conclusion, as experienced and effective users of telecourses will confirm, is overhasty and betrays misconceptions. If it were not, courses like Coast's As Man Behaves, Dallas' American Government, or Miami-Dade's humanities series would not be finding the widespread and repeated uses that they do.

In this background paper, we shall have time to touch on only some of the considerations that go into designing a TV-based course of study planned for a student who, more often than not, has only minimal on-campus contacts and "attends" classes by watching programs on open broadcast at home or in closed-circuit viewings in libraries and campus study centers. The telecourse, if well designed, integrates print, video, other suitable media accessible to the student, and allows for a variety of interpersonal activities: face-to-face counseling, supervised examinations, telephone consultations, etc.

Before turning to such matters as determining what telecourses are needed, the process of designing them, and the economics of producing them, we should start by classifying courses offered via television and describing their target audiences, so that we understand the nature of the product to which we shall be devoting most of our attention.

I. What Is a Telecourse and Who Are the Audiences for Them?

The term "telecourse" is a recent one and is intended to distinguish what has established itself as a distinctive method of instructional delivery from what are loosely called "TV courses" or "televised courses." A telecourse

is not just a sequence of instructional television programs supplemented by a textbook and other readings. Nor is it simply an illustrated correspondence course although some telecourses require a good deal of correspondence and the pictures, or video, serve, among other functions, that of pacing the student's progress. Nor is a telecourse a series of videotaped classroom lecture-demonstrations, no matter how effective such performances can be when presented by a gifted teacher. (Some readers will recall a professor-performer like Frank Baxter, who introduced thousands of TV viewers to Shakespeare in the 50's.) Rather, the producers of telecourses deliberately exploit the distinctive multisensory presentational properties of the TV medium, taking advantage of all the possibilities for on-site filming, creative editing, and studio enhancement.

Masterful television presentation alone, however, is not enough. The first-rate PBS series, Nova, for example, is not a telecourse in our sense. To make it one - which has often been suggested - we would have to combine and supplement the discrete program units with printed matter and organize them so as to achieve a set of definable and measurable instructional goals. We would have to devise a study guide for the credit student, match readings to the TV programs and study units, write examinations and progress tests, suggest kinds of field trips, devise exercises calling for controlled observations and problem solving, and create home laboratory activities. This would satisfy what Dean Tom Gripp, a director of telecourse development at Coast Community College District, insists be one of distinguishing marks of a telecourse: namely, that it be an integrated system of instruction, employing both video and print media. The key, of course, is integrating the elements. Combining elements into an integral whole, is not, as telecourse producers freely admit, an easy task.

At this point, we should pause to recognize an irony and anticipate a possible objection to the conditions we have implied are prerequisite to acceptance

of telecourses. The most popular by far of recent courses offered on television, The Long Search, Classic Theater, The Ascent of Man, are in light of our definition, really TV courses. The programs, which present television with its best foot forward as an educative and intellectually stimulating medium, were broadcast over the PBS network at times when millions could watch. As a result, well over a hundred thousand viewers enrolled for college credit in institutions that offered the series as credit courses once they were supplemented by print. The print materials, unfortunately for the credit viewer, were prepared after the video programs were written and produced. That is, the video content had been determined without regard to formal instructional presentation. Useful as they are, the print materials at times appear an afterthought, with the primary print references, the text written by Jacob Bronowski or Kenneth Clark, little more than readable and well illustrated transcripts pf program narrative. Collections of additional readings had to be gathered together hastily by people who had had no contact with the program content designers. Thus they strike some as snippets that do not always allow for investigation in any depth. (Appropriately enough, courses of this kind are called "wrap-arounds," since the print materials prepared later are wrapped around a video series produced for a general viewing audience.)

Besides "telecourses," as we are defining them (most produced by two-year community colleges to date), and the "wrap-around" courses, there are video courses produced for audiences with highly specialized and narrow interests; e.g., courses in continuing professional development for teachers, physicians, dentists, nurses; courses for insurance and real estate brokers, technicians, et. al; courses in developmental and remedial-level reading and computational skills; courses to prepare adults for high school equivalency tests. Our concern in this paper, however, is with telecourses designed and produced to be used at the lower-division college level as credit offerings in core general education areas or in high-demand and elective and occupational areas.

It should be noted, too, that the interest of four-year colleges and universities is growing in some of the community-college produced telecourses, because the telecourses are useful in reaching out to older learners who become more attractive as enrollments of students of conventional college age decline, especially in liberal studies curricula. The Maryland National University Consortium, which will make British Open University video-related courses available to American students through participating local institutions, and the Wayne State Weekend Studies project, which, aided by federal funding is now spreading to a consortium of colleges, are good examples of this lively interest in TV and TV-related courses at the university level. Both the programs are bachelor's degree-oriented.

Enough students have already enrolled in telecourses as defined above to enable producers and users to have a fairly firm "fix" on the characteristics of the audience for them, though the community-college producers are the first to admit that much more research into audiences, their special characteristics, and the reasons for their failure or success is needed. Interestingly enough, the profile of the "distant learner" (to use British educators' term) who succeeds in telecourses has changed little since the '60's and early '70's, when Chicago's TV College, among others, conducted a series of studies. The early findings in Chicago, for example, were again corroborated by the recently completed CBS-funded Station-College Executive Project in Adult Learning (SCEPAL) project. The informative final SCEPAL report, entitled Telecourses: Reflections '80, describes a telecourse student as follows:

> At the two-year college level, the "typical" telecourse student tends to be slightly older than on-campus students (29 to 31), is more apt to be female than male, is in a middle to upper income bracket, is most likely studying part time, is employed or with little children, and has had some college. Up to 70% of telecourse students at this level take on-campus courses as well as telecourses (p.4).

It should be noted that among those surveyed were a goodly number of students living in more affluent parts of Southern California and in the Dallas County Community College District, which has an unusually high proportion of students who take conventional college courses while they take telecourses. They may distort the outlines a bit. But anyone who has worked with telecourses in regions where there is a large enough population base to allow for the enrollment of a sizable number of credit students can refine the above profile. The successful student is a mature adult, credentials-minded, career-oriented, and highly motivated. In short, he or she displays a lower middle-class composite of traits. In passing, we should note that the producer interested in designing telecourses of the kind now finding the widest use - usually revolving around thirty, thirty-minute video programs - keeps this profile in mind. If he takes as his target audience, for example, people without proficiencies in basic study skills whose previous school experience has been unproductive and frustrating, he foredooms himself to failure and a short-lived career, unless he adjusts his overall course design to a different profile.

There is, of course, a hard question to be raised at this point. How many people are there in the general population willing to enroll in telecourses, and, once enrolled, capable of profiting from such study? And there is a corollary consideration: can we assume that the number of candidates for such study will remain steady, year after year, and that the participants will come back to telecourses, term after term?

As for the last question, experience so far is not encouraging. Extensive users of telecourses report that the largest proportion of telecourse students are first-time enrollees. As we shall note again later, this is a clear message to producers that, given the student interest in credentialing, telecourses can not be planned as single units, but, rather, as parts of sequences that lead to

significant credentialing within a reasonable time. As for the first question, the size of the potential audience for distance learning, we have recent data collected in numerous surveys conducted by the University of Mid-America and others. To the surprise of no one actively involved in instructional television, expensive Nielsen-type investigations disclose that some two to five percent of general population samples indicate they would take courses on television, the percentage within range increasing for courses with a more strictly "adult education" appeal - sketching, gardening, money management, etc.

Yet these are not grounds for pessimism. The AACJC Task Force on the Uses of Mass Media for Learning (Task Force), now numbers sixteen institutional and consortial members. Of the sixteen, about half have successful experience in producing telecourses for national distribution; several have established themselves as long-term successful producers with a growing and faithful clientele. A growing number of community colleges enroll enough students in telecourses year after year to make offering them economically feasible. Some larger districts - Chicago, Dallas, the Task Force consortia - count their enrollments in the thousands every year.

We must always keep in mind, as has already been noted, that even though the telecourse audience is made up of many older adults who study at a distance and seldom appear on campus, more and more students each year, for reasons of convenience, are combining a telecourse or two with programs of conventional on-campus classes. As cable TV penetrates more American homes, and as the fuel for our cars becomes scarcer and even more costly, we can expect to find more students cutting down on travel by watching classes on TV sets in their home one or two days each week.

The SCEPAL report to which we have already referred attributes the appeal of telecourses to five main "factors": 1) a student's vocational interest;

2) degree requirements; 3) the presence on camera of a well-known personality; 4) cost; and 5) convenience. This conclusion, despite the lack of parallelism among the factors, is true in a rough-and-ready way. But the prospective producer of telecourses should not conclude that a business course required of all students seeking degrees in management, presented by a well-known actor persuasive enough to make the viewer suspend his disbelief and accept him as a management authority, will invariably enroll a hundred students in a signal area with a population, say, of a half million. Unfortunately, as the producer-colleges who are members of the AACJC Task Force will agree, this is hardly the case. For one thing, the producer college has no control over the tuition levied by a user college, the fourth of the SCEPAL factors. Nor does it have any control over what time a PBS station in Denver or Hartford, or even a cable system in Dubuque, will air a program - if, indeed, it will at all. As for the other "factors," the producer does exert control over them, complex as they are.

II. How Many and What Kinds of Telecourses Are Needed?

One does not have to be a specialist to recognize that basic to effective merchandising is an extensive and varied inventory of items to sell. The stock of merchandise must be regularly replenished and the displays redesigned. During the past twenty-five years, and even much more recently, several promising ITV projects have come a cropper simply because they lacked an inventory of courses sufficient both to meeting student demands and recruiting a stream of new students term after term.

This is not the time to name names. But there is a valuable lesson for telecourse producers to learn from the longevity of the Chicago TV College. The video programs of the courses presented during its high point of credit enrollments from the late '50's through the '60's were rough-cut, indeed, at times,

little more than a single camera focused on a "talking face" professor standing at a chalk board. Nonetheless, enrollments remained consistently high from year to year because the courses offered and rotated at three or four semester intervals satisfied core curriculum requirements and appealed to common occupational interests. Even though only relatively few - some 500 - completed an entire A. A. program on TV, many who enrolled completed shorter sequences, usually twelve to fifteen credit hours, that they eventually transferred to conventional programs. Surveys conducted disclosed, in fact, that every year as many as 20% of the graduates of the City Colleges of Chicago, of which TV College is an extension, had earned, on an average, fifteen hours on their required sixty credit hours via TV - usually before transferring to one of the on-campus programs.

Are telecourse producers now responding to this demand for a full range of courses that appeal to student need? The answer is that they are now attending to what the data tell them, making educated guesses as to what particular courses in high-enrollment core areas will prove most appealing and least ephemeral, and proceeding on the basis of well informed hunches as to what general-interest courses will find markets. They have learned from the experience of others that a production, no matter how spectacular, that calls attention to itself only as a spectacle, is not enough; they have also learned that, painful though the lesson may be, it is even unwise to accept support for the production of courses that appeal only to narrow and usually short-lived interests.

As long ago as seven or eight years, the major two-year college producers began, in an informal way, to identify high-demand curricular areas in which there can be presumed a need for telecourses. The Task Force, which has been in existence for some three years, now serves as a useful agency wherein such discussions encourage planning on a cooperative basis. Such discussions, above all, have discouraged what has been a bane of telecourse production, namely

wasteful duplication of effort. Too often, for example, several institutions were producing courses in child development and consumer economics.

Planning for core general studies courses is not simple, but it is far less tricky than planning for general interest courses. Most lower-division curricula still require courses in the humanities, the social sciences, the sciences and mathematics. Many require, or recommend just short of requiring, specific courses such as American history, economics, or political science.

An examination of the Mass Media Colleges Catalog, published and kept up to date by the AACJC Task Force, discloses that enough courses of market-tested acceptability now exist to satisfy common lower-division core requirements. Some areas even boast an embarrassment of riches, as, for example, in the humanities, where there are four or five imaginative and well-produced courses available. A few of the areas, mathematics and the physical sciences, in particular, are not so well served.

Although the number of available courses in the humanities may suggest the wasteful overlap of effort just deplored, they do, in fact, through their different emphases and approaches, provide additional resources for users, particularly community college users. With the ever-mounting emphasis on occupation and career education, there has been a reduction of general studies in two-year curricula. Whereas fifteen years ago, half a student's course work in a technical program might have been in general education, nowadays that requirement has been halved at least, and in some shorter sequences, cut even more. Given only a three-credit hour humanities requirement, a serious question arises as to how a student can best satisfy this modest demand - by selecting any course that catches his fancy or fits into a convenient time slot, or by taking a specially designed course that cuts across disciplines, stresses human values, and emphasizes the interrelatedness of all knowledge? Popular telecourses like Miami's The Art of

Being Human, American Government, and The Humanities Through the Arts are encouraging curriculum rethinking in user institutions, whether the rethinking has to do with the place of general education in the total curriculum or with instructional approaches and techniques.

Duplication of effort is still with us, nonetheless. But producers are recognizing more and more the benefits of a division of effort. For example, among subjects presently considered as prime areas for telecourse production are sociology and economics. From time to time, a number of Task Force members have expressed interest in undertaking production. But Miami-Dade and Dallas have been allowed, in effect, to stake their claims. Miami plans to design and produce economics on a collaborative basis, with several Task Force members pledging money and faculty expertise to the support of the project; Dallas, having already generated considerable momentum on its own, will act as sole producer of sociology.

Both colleges have won national and international reputations as producers of high-quality video programs, programs that not infrequently rival in general-audience appeal cultural series shown on PBS. The former owns and maintains a first-rate production facility, permanently staffed by professionals well trained in television techniques; the latter has regular access, on a contractual basis, to the local PTV station's facilities and personnel.

This agreement by other capable producers of the telecourses in question to leave the field to Miami and Dallas amounts not only to tacit endorsement of the efforts but also to de facto precommitment to use of the two series. Likewise, a recent implied agreement on the part of Task Force producer-members to leave production of a basic electricity series aimed at a pre-college level to the Milwaukee Area Technical College betokens the intention of other members to adopt the series, since there has been strong consensus over the past few years

that such a telecourse designed for a different kind of target audience would fill a need.

Selection of courses in areas of general interest - e.g., Free Hand Sketching, Oil Painting Techniques, Photography, Home Gardener - is also based, to large degree, on data as to student preferences gathered over the years, and on hunches as to the audience appeal of a performer or teacher who happens to be available locally. Enrollment figures and information collected in questionnaires indicate that adults like self-help and leisure-time enrichment courses -- consumerism, personal finance, home design, the arts. The TV medium, with its magnification properties, its possibilities for on-site filming and for bringing the outside world into the studio, lends itself naturally to such programming.

Finding a credit-student market for general-interest courses is risky. As we noted earlier, credit students invest time and efforts in courses because they are in quest of credentials, want to complete requirements as quickly as possible on the way to a final goal. For example, studies of credit enrollments in Ascent of Man reveal what any experienced ITV practitioner would have predicted. Whenever the course is offered under the catalog designation of a required or highly recommended course -- Introduction to the Humanities, for example -- it attracts sizable numbers of credit students; whenever it is listed as a more exotic general-interest elective in the college catalog - history or science and technology, say - it enrolls far fewer students (see M. E. Hoachlander, The Ascent of Man: A Multiple of Uses, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 1977).

On the other hand, well produced general interest courses appeal to public and commercial broadcasters as programs for general audiences. Even in PBS markets in cities like New York, Chicago, and Boston, where normally one expects to find only mild interest in airing college-credit telecourses, series like Coast Community College District's Oil Painting Techniques and Home Gardener

are broadcast as part of the weekday or Saturday early evening schedule. This means, naturally, that a user institution in the area has a good chance of reaching a large audience, and consequently, of enrolling a respectable number of credit students.

It should be noted, though we have not yet discussed costs of production, that the expenses of designing and producing telecourses that appeal to leisure or self-help interests usually are significantly below those incurred in producing general education series. The courses often revolve around a single expert or local personality and do not need the complicated apparatus of instructional support so necessary to a core course in science or the humanities.

We can conclude this section by noting that Task Force members are currently very much interested in bringing about the creation of some mechanism or agency to make it possbile for men and women all over the nation to earn the A. A. degree and other lower-division credentials in alternative, technology-based programs. As indicated, there already exists a broad inventory of market-tested telecourses in general education and general interest areas. It certainly would be to the benefit of telecourse users and producers alike if men and women in all regions of the country were able to complete A. A.-oriented programs, in part or in whole, by enrolling in telecourses. This would not entail the creation of new institutions. It could result through a coordination of effort within the various regions of the nation served by public community colleges, commercial and public TV stations, and cable TV systems. All the regions, too, have ready access to some or all of the newer video technologies - e.g., videocassettes, videodiscs - that permit students to schedule "broadcasts" at times that suit their convenience. Such a development would add a final chapter to the realization of equal access to postsecondary education for all citizens.

III. How Are Telecourses Designed?

Once an institution has decided what is to be produced, the producer starts the lengthy and often tedious process of making a telecourse. Designing a course in general education or in high-demand occupational area can, as indicated, be particularly difficult. Though the process varies from producer to producer and is, inevitably, more complex if it is carried on by institutions working in collaboration, the major steps remain the same. Several of the producers - Dallas and Coast, for example - have published guidelines which outline the steps essential to the design process.

A first element, of course, is enough time. It is not unusual to need two years or more to see a telecourse from the early steps of planning and conceptualizing, through the sketching out of program content and topic treatment, through scripting programs and preparing associated study materials, through final studio production and editing. This much time and more was required, for example, for a telecourse like the recent American Government produced by Dallas with the collaboration of Chicago, Coast, and Tarrant County. Just the problem of getting together members of a faculty advisory team separated by long distances can be a formidable one.

Once the telecourse to be designed has been determined, a course content team is formed to work with instructional design and production specialists. Someone is named project leader, a person with strong qualifications in the subject matter of the course who maintains liaison with the technical production staff and coordinates the overall effort. (The position of the instructional designer can be a key one in the process and deserves a special word in passing. Her or she is a relatively new professional in education, trained to define attainable learning goals, match appropriate instructional strategies and procedures, multi-media-based and traditional, to the attainment of the goals, and design evaluation techniques.) From time to time the help of outside consultants, usually

university specialists in the academic discipline involved, is sought, so as to insure scholarly quality.

Total planning can be expensive and complex, not to mention time-consuming, as already indicated - especially if the effort is a multi-institutional one. The ACCESS Corporation, a not-for-profit group which has designed and produced six video-based courses (five of them slide/sound and one full-motion video), is made up of six community colleges spread around the country. Putting together a team made up of a faculty member from each of the colleges is difficult and expensive, and involves real problems of logistics as well. The advantages to the user, however, can far outweigh the difficulties of the producer. The course resulting reflects the approaches and emphases of a representative group of colleges.

Since students, both young and old, expect from instructional TV the same sophisticated production techniques they have been accustomed to by commercial TV, once the advisory team has determined the objectives and content to be covered in the programs and has outlined how the content can best be treated, professional writers and producer-directors must begin the scripting and the visual realization. Studio production, filming, graphics design, clearing materials for use on the air - all of this, often a lengthy process, begins. Concurrently, there must go on the planning and designing of course study materials. Some of the two-year college producers even provide special utilization manuals for user institutions, as well, a practice that can pay dividends in that it eases fears of the administrators and faculty coordinating and managing outside uses.

There is neither the need nor the time to go into all the details of planning, designing, and producing telecourses. Enough has been said to make it clear that the effort can, indeed, seem a monumental one, particularly in a college where faculty and staff feel much more at home with the planning and

design of traditional methods of instruction.

IV. How Much Does It Cost to Produce a Telecourse?

This first thing to be said is that high-quality telecourses are not designed and produced on the cheap, nor, as we have seen, are they completed within the neat and manageable divisions of semesters and school years. No single institution on its own could justify an investment of the size required for producing a telecourse of the quality of Coast's As Man Behaves or The Maryland Center-Chicago TV College's Of Earth and Man, unless it has a reasonable expectation that its initial outlay for production can be recouped, in large part at least, by the lease or sale of the programs to other institutions.

Even when production costs are borne or shared by commercial organizations, with that organization reserving certain distribution and use rights - as is the case with some of the telecourse ventures of Coast, Northern Virginia Community College, and the Milwaukee-Area Technical College, to single out only several Task Force members - no institution on its own can risk taking on an expenditure of such magnitude without a genuine prospect of recovering some of the costs through outside uses.

It is hard to place a precise price tag on a college-produced telecourse. Many of the costs are intangible, in that they take the shape of services rendered by people already in the regular employ of the institution: administrators, TV and instructional design specialists, faculty members. Some producers own their production and broadcast facilities and thus make substantial "in-kind" contributions to design and production, services which it is difficult to translate into actual dollar equivalencies.

As indicated earlier, on occasion, a course with broad audience appeal that attracts large numbers of credit students as well can be produced for

$50,000 - $75,000, if it is a straightforward studio production requiring little, if any, location filming or editing, and revolves around a local "personality." Coast, for example, has had great success with art and personal finance courses produced at modest cost. They are technically uncomplicated productions, featuring bright local personalities who are experts in their fields. But, as a rule, a telecourse centering around thirty half-hour video programs (which, for reasons having to do with appeasing faculty and accrediting agencies by "equating" time spent viewing TV programs with time spent sitting in a classroom in a three-credit hour course, has become a "standard") cannot be produced for less than several hundred thousand dollars, even by institutions having their own production facilities and staffs. Some courses can run up to a million dollars, particularly if filming is done in far-flung places, rights to a good deal of existing film have to be acquired, professional theatrical groups must be engaged, and other rebroadcast and use rights must be negotiated. If we take five or six years as the normal life expectancy of a telecourse unrevised - which is a useful rule-of-thumb - we can easily appreciate that cost recovery through outside use is a matter of vital concern for the academic producer.

We can conclude this necessarily brief discussion of cost by listing the major categories of expenditure in budgeting a telecourse production. Forming two basic divisions, of course, are those costs associated with content planning and design and thoses costs associated with the video production itself. Included in planning and design expenses are the costs of printed study materials, as well as costs of employing faculty advisors, instructional designers, and content consultants. Production-associated costs involve more than leasing studio facilities and the professional services or salaries for people already on staff. There is often payment for special services like animation, often payment in addition to that contracted for with a station or production house for special editing

services. Considerable sums can be spent on researching film, photograph, and document archives, music collections, and the like, to locate materials that must be cleared for use in a production. Once such materials have been located, as indicated above, clearance fees, often sizable, must be paid. Finally, once costs for design and production have been met, there are still additional costs for promoting and distributing the product.

Enough has been said to indicate telecourse production can be expensive indeed. Even though ITV production budgets are not high by commercial standards - no college, for example, could handle the production budgets of The Long Search or the Ascent of Man; even though they were produced in Europe, where professional and other costs are significantly lower - they are high for non-profit public service institutions with little access to "risk" capital.

V. What Does the Future Look Like?

The reader has already inferred from what has been said that producers of college-credit telecourses for national distribution are handicapped by the fragmented and somewhat uncoordinated nature of their efforts, as well as from the inescapable fact that anything smacking of standardizing, or "pre-packaging" instruction, as more hostile observers might say, runs directly counter to the traditions and practices of U. S. higher education.

As for problems of fragmentation of effort: we have already noted that the two-year college producers who are members of the AACJC Task Force are now trying to eliminate duplication of labor and are planning future productions so as to provide men and women who must, or prefer, to study in technology-based programs with a full and articulated sequence of courses that lead to significant academic credentialing and personal and occupational improvement.

The Task Force as a whole is also interested in undertaking and encouraging

its members and others to undertake continuing investigations of what teaching functions are best performed by the various components of telecourses, what courses learners want, and how they can learn best by telecourses. Data yielded will serve to guide producers as they plan curricula and design their courses.

The Task Force, too, plans to explore new models, or formats, for the credit telecourse. Some institutions complain that the standard thirty, thirty-minute video component is in some instances unnecessarily intensive, limits possibilities for local adaptation, and even tends to encourage student passivity. This format, of course, is not sacrosanct. As noted, it was "standardized" to allay the concerns of faculty and administrators about student "contact" hours in a non-traditional course. We now have learned that the telecourse is a distinctive learning experience, with distinctive delivery capabilities. There is no reason that for certain instructional purposes, fifteen one-hour programs, or fifteen half-hour programs, would be just as effective.

Much remains to be done. The Task Force as a group must continue exploring ways in which an inventory of high-quality video-based and video-related materials can be made available and kept up to date year after year. The answer may be - seems likely to be - the creation of some means, not a separate institution or an extension of an already existing institution, whereby students all over the nation can have ready access to high-grade technology-based instructional materials. There is currently discussion of an Open University of America that would act as an educational broker for adults who earn college credit in unconventional ways. It is a little hard to imagine, in the present climate, such an institution developing, and one can with justification ask if it is really necessary. But there is no reason institutions within the regions of the country could not establish a flexible compact whereby they would agree to present

telecourses regularly and schedule them so that they culminate in the associate degree. Such a compact, or series of compacts, would act as a further inducement to telecourse producers to plan their productions sequentially. After all, they would have some advance assurance of adoption and use.

The distribution capabilities of the satellite-based new educational/instruction service of the Public Broadcasting Service (PTV-3), described in a separate background paper for this conference; the potential of the new video technologies, especially the videodisc; and the rapid growth of cable TV with its interactive capacities make the establishment of a comprehensive technology-based alternative to conventional postsecondary education more and more feasible. As usual, of course, the technology itself is far outpacing curriculum design and course production. The real challenge, it must be said once more, is for telecourse producers to insure that there is a steady flow of video-related materials to satisfy the already well-documented needs of learners.

For all this to come about there must be an uninterrupted flow of information and exchange of ideas between telecourse producers and telecourse users. The best example of such interaction comes when a committed telecourse user, with no aspirations to the status of telecourse producer, helps underwrite and supports someone else's production. Such active collaboration is one way of guaranteeing that the resulting product will be used outside the producing institution.

The ideal, ultimately, for the producer would be an arrangement like that whereby books at one time were - and still are on occasion - published, by advance subscription. This, roughly, is the procedure that supports the production of TV materials by the Agency for Instructional Television (AIT) of Bloomington, Indiana, an exemplary self-supporting organization that provides materials for use in grades K through 12. U. S. state and Canadian provincial

education authorities review the agency's proposed TV-based projects with a view to prior approval and precommitment to use. The precommitment may take the form of actually helping underwrite production costs in accordance with a formula based on school populations within the states. Such commitments guarantee the producers the recovery of base costs. Leases and sales to others not pre-committed allow for the creation of a revolving fund to support overhead expenses and the costs of further curriculum planning.

Although it would be a boon to ITV producers, such an arrangement does not lend itself to the world of postsecondary education, where, as everyone knows, local autonomy in matter of curriculum is the rule. But this does not preclude exploring other avenues. Perhaps we can create agencies, or mechanisms, appropriate to the postsecondary community and its customs that will keep open channels of communication between producers and potential users before, during, and after the production/design process.

The signs are unmistakable that the market for college-credit telecourses is no will-o-the-wisp or enthusiast's pipe dream. The interest commercial publishers and distributors of film materials have shown in investing in telecourses is perhaps proof enough. What is an even surer sign, however, is the lasting size of the audience, even though courses have often been produced on a helter-skelter basis, without much regard for the demonstrated needs of students. Is it an unreasonable assumption that as our population grows older and the fuel crisis makes us less mobile, the market for off-campus education will grow?

This admittedly has been a cursory treatment of complicated issues. But if a reader takes away some notion of the problems the academic producer of telecourses for a national market encounters and feels, as a result, somewhat better prepared to discuss the matter of what part a telecourse-user institution should play in the whole planning process, its purpose will have been accomplished.

CONSORTIUM USES OF TELECOURSE MATERIALS

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CONSORTIUM USES OF TELECOURSE MATERIALS

The Florida Community College System has several times served as a model for other community college systems. With the realization that television had become one of the dominant mediums of mass communication the Florida Community College System served as a model when it began the development in 1973 of the Florida Community College Television and Radio Consortium.

A major reason for the search for a cooperative method or organizing the presentation of televised college credit courses was that of cost. With relatively high costs of acquisition and of leasing documentaries, producing written materials, purchasing television broadcast time and adapting telecourses to local needs, it became apparent that television based instruction created special economic problems for a single institution.

The great interest expressed in a possible statewide consortium by several of Florida's public community colleges was such that with the aid of the Florida Department of Education plans were developed and approved for the formation of the Florida Community College Television and Radio Consortium. The plan assigned each of Florida's twenty-eight community colleges to one of six regions. Each of the regions was centered upon, and somewhat determined by, the local public television station's broadcast ability. Each college was to serve the student population of its own district and would share equally in the decision

making processes and in the funding of the region's operations. Each region would choose a volunteer coordinator. These six coordinators would, in turn, meet on a statewide basis and would choose a chairman. This organization has functioned in such a way that the coordinators have shared in the development of plans, programs and new funding solutions. The organizational plan and resulting Florida Community College Television and Radio Consortium was approved by the Florida State Community College Council of Academic Affairs, the Florida Community College Presidents' Council, and by the Florida Division of Community Colleges of the State Department of Education. Subsequently, all twenty-eight colleges have expressed interest and have participated in the Consortium.

The Florida Television and Radio Consortium at the time of its formation was unique in that it developed from within the Florida Community College System. The Consortium was designed to meet the needs of the individual colleges and was not superimposed upon the system at the state level. Much credit must be given to Robert McCabe, President of Miami-Dade Community College who provided much leadership and support to the Consortium's development.

Additional encouragement, technical and financial aid came next from the Florida Department of Education. J. Warren Binns, Administrator of Educational Television and Radio, agreed to assist the Consortium. This aid came in many forms but two of the most important were the leasing by the Department of Education for the Consortium, the majority of its televised courses and secondly, that it served as a dubbing center for all series offered by the Consortium. Both of these actions greatly relieved the financial burden placed upon the Consortium's member colleges.

Locating Materials

A problem that often arises for educational television consortiums or associations that do not themselves produce their own television based course materials is that of locating appropriate materials. Until the recent addition of such listings as those of AACJC much of the search for new material was on a hit or miss basis. Often first knowledge of the existence of a telecourse has been gained from the varied public relations efforts of the individual producing entities. Other sources have been the various educational television or audio visual workshops with their displays of equipment and materials.

The difficulty of locating a wide variety of materials have been especially acute in the areas of high student enrollment such as the widely found general education courses. These freshmen and sophomore courses across the nation enroll thousands of students each college term yet there have been very few television based courses produced to fill this need. It is true that a number of high quality course materials such as "As Man Behaves," "The Growing Years," "The Ascent of Man," "It's Everybody's Business" have been produced with many colleges now using them. Many other colleges and universities have tried to enter this instructional area but often their efforts have centered upon the recording of lectures and slide show presentations. While it can be said those presenting the materials were often talented professionals in their respective fields of academic endeavor they have often possessed little knowledge of the limitations and potentials of television based instruction. Due to the often poor or limited production procedures many of these program series are simply not being used by the majority of colleges

now offering television based instruction. There are several reasons for this reluctance, one of which is that of low appeal to the student. The college student of today is accustomed to viewing and using high quality audio visual materials. Materials produced poorly will receive poor student usage and will have a resulting low student enrollment. A second problem linked to poor production quality and style is that many television stations today are reluctant or will refuse to use poorly produced educational materials during prime hours due to the lack of viewer appeal. The local stations when reviewing telecourses must consider the general viewing public of which the stations does not wish to lose its share due to extremely poor production of the television series.

It is not that excellent instructional courses cannot be produced. One only has to view such series as "The Ascent of Man," to have the enjoyment of factual materials being presented in an enlightening and entertaining style. The number and variety of these courses for use in general education has continued to be severly limited. Additional production work must be undertaken in this area. It is not that it cannot be done because such institutions as Miami-Dade Community College, Dallas Community College and Coastline Community College have been doing it for several years.

The television based courses offered by the Florida Community Colleges are usually chosen on the basis of consortium agreement. The Florida Consortium regional representatives meet regularly to conduct reviews of available materials and to discuss future needs. After initial viewing by the region representative the recommended tapes are then viewed by the faculties of the individual colleges in each region,

which then make their recommendations to the regional coordinator who then in agreement with the other five coordiantors recommends what the State should lease or buy.

Adaptation of Materials

The adoption of a television based course is very often not as simple as it may at first seem. Quite often a lengthy period of review by instructional faculties of the course objectives and content takes place. Occasionally questions arise as to advisability of totally adopting such a course with all of its content and components. In some instances only the reordering of the sequence of tapes has been necessary. In a majority of instances extensive modification by either state, regional or local consortium professionals has had to take place on at least one part and on several parts of the course package.

Many of the changes have resulted when there arose differences between the television based course materials and the local curriculum. Other changes have occurred in efforts to modify the courses so as to lessen faculty resistance to telecourses. In one instance changes were made to reflect a more local focus. The very popular series produced by Miami-Dade Community College, Man and Environment I and II was an excellent example of the range of adaptive changes. The series consisted of thirty one-half hour tapes which were equally divided between the series' two courses. North Florida Community College at Jacksonville believed that a more local focus to the course was needed and so produced its own series of tapes to be used with those of Miami-Dade Community College. Other changes involved in adopting these two courses could be found in the Central Florida Region of the Consortium. Here,

not only were tapes reordered as to sequence there were new study guides developed and different textbooks chosen.

Consortium Benefits

The resulting advantages to the Consortium's individual member colleges have been numerous. Each college has shared in the selection of courses and has had the flexibility of participating or not participating in any of the course arrangements. This system of cooperation has helped all colleges in that it provided a greater sharing of expertise in such activities as the selection of materials, the development of faculty workshops, study guides and other printed materials. Another advantage of this Consortium was that no longer would any individual college have to pay all the costs, for by cooperating, they paid an equal share of costs.

Recommendations

The American Association of Community and Junior Colleges should consider the establishment of an organization of telecourse users within the Association. If properly organized and funded the organization would be able to aid the users of television based materials throughout the nation. The various areas of activity in which such an organization would work are numerous. The problems associated with the limited number of telecourses that could be used in general education is one such area of concern. Concentrated effort not only in manpower but also skills and appropriate funding is needed. Another concern of such an organization would be the development of needed funding for the organization's

activities and programs. By functioning as an integral part of AACJC the various hinderences of achieving the needed funding from governmental agencies and foundations should be somewhat eased.

A third area of concern and a major point of concentrated effort would be to work with the colleges and organizations that are producers of telecourses. This combined effort should take place not only in the actual uses of the telecourses but also in the development and design stages of production. This would allow greater access to what is being produced and would also aid the producers to be discerning the actual needs of the users. Hence greater and wider uses of telecourse material would hopefully result.

As to the organizational structure of this proposed new organization within the Association one might review the organizational structures and strengths and weaknesses of several operating educational consortial groups now in the United States.

PTV-3 AND THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE CONNECTION

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PTV-3 AND THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE CONNECTION

In fiscal year 1979-80, the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), a national membership organization of this country's public television stations, undertook a complete re-examination of its structure and services. A major result was the establishment of three new and semi-autonomous program services: PTV-1--responsible for evening, general audience programs; PTV-2--responsible for special interest programs for target audiences; PTV-3--responsible for educational programs and services.

The creation of three distinct PBS programming services is important for public television stations and for the public in general because it will offer television audiences a wider range and a greater diversity of programming. However, for the education community, this new organizational structure is especially significant. Of course, educational programming is not a new departure for PBS; public broadcasting has a distinguished history of superior educational series and individual shows. But with the establishment of PTV-3, the first separate programming service, devoted entirely to education, formal and informal, now exists.

The establishment of PTV-3 took over a year of work by a PBS staff planning team and an advisory board of professional broadcasters and educators. After months of extensive consultation with national leaders and local

experts, months of visions and revisions, the educational telecommunications programming service of PTV-3 is now a fully staffed and functioning part of PBS.

The mission of PTV-3 is ambitious but achievable: "To provide a full range of educational and instructional programs and program-related services for pre-school children, youth and adult audiences for at-home and in-school use." The service is divided into three major program areas--a general children and youth service, a kindergarten through twelvth grade in-school service and an adult learning service. For higher education, the implications and the potentials are enormous, for adult learning programming is broadly defined by PTV-3 as "any program which helps adults to learn, and thus includes credit and non-credit as well as 'how to' programs that informally instruct."

Since the advent of television in the 1940's, educators have dreamed of using this powerful medium for learning. And, despite those critics who bemoan "the failure of television to meet its challenges and to live up to its promises in education," the fact is that television has already played, and is still playing, an important role in higher education today. The last decade was one of exceptionally vigorous growth. In 1970, only "Sunrise Semester" offered college credit via television on a national level. By the end of the 70's, there were over 100 courses produced

by individual colleges and various consortia which were marketed nation-wide. According to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's "Higher Education Utilization Study" (Dirr, 1979), there were almost one-half million enrollments in college credit courses in academic year 1978-79. Although most of these enrollments were for courses offered on campus via closed-circuit systems, a rapidly growing number of colleges used open-circuit broadcasts during the past decade, and this trend will, no doubt, accelerate as PTV-3 gets underway.

The growing interest in the use of television by the higher education community is not really surprising in view of several important national trends. There is a national demographic shift expanding the ranks of people over the age of 30. There is also a declining enrollment in college courses by the traditional 18-25 year olds and a declining enrollment by full-time students. At the same time, there is an increasing enrollment of students over 25 years old, an increasing enrollment of women and an increasing enrollment of part-time students. In most post-secondary institutions, the challenge in the past to find more teachers and more campus classroom space for full-time students just out of high school has become today's challenge to find new programs and better delivery systems to provide the flexibility, the relevance, and the excellence that older, part-time students demand. Other

trends have also impacted curricula: more leisure time for most adults through shorter working hours and the choice of early retirement; the growing prevalence of career changes in middle and later years; the continuing growth of licensing and relicensing regulations by states for professions and technical occupations. These changes have demanded and received more attention to continuing education, life-long learning, and professional development. Because of these trends and needs, as well as the national energy crisis and the widespread shrinkage of funds for post-secondary education, colleges and universities are very appropriately examining and increasingly using television as a delivery mode for adult learners.

Public television is uniquely suited to deliver adult learning programming. Over 97% of all U.S. homes have at least one television set, and almost every home in the nation can now receive the PBS signal directly or by cable. Further, since the PBS stations are linked via satellite, the potential for cost saving and sharing among post-secondary institutions, producers and television stations is significant. In addition, PBS is committed to the exploration of new and developing technologies and to the best ways to utilize these in the public interest. Many public television stations are now in the process of becoming complete telecommunications centers. And the Adult Learning

Department of PTV-3 is already operational and deeply involved in the difficult but exciting tasks of setting and implementing short term and long range goals.

Thus, with the appropriate programs, scheduling, and services, public television will be able to serve the needs of multitudes of adult learners unwilling or unable to come to campuses in the eighties and beyond. Such, in fact, is the mandate of PTV-3's Adult Learning Department. However, to make this goal a reality will require the forging of a strong new partnership between public television and higher education. From the education community must come the curricular needs and priorities; from the broadcasting community, the production expertise; from PTV-3 and the public television stations, a national delivery system; and from the efforts of all, the ancillary services and coordination of planning and efforts.

One of the most important links in this new partnership must be between PTV-3 and the community and junior colleges of this country. In fact, two year colleges and public television have already established a strong working relationship. Community colleges have taken the lead in developing telecourses for national distribution. Coast Community College District, Dallas County Community College District, Miami-Dade Community College District, Northern Virginia Community College District, the Southern California Consortium, and others have each produced and marketed telecourses. These syndicated courses have been used by

more than six hundred post-secondary institutions in the United States. The growing market and marketing effort prompted the organization of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges Task Force on Mass Media for Learning, an important organization of producing institutions. The achievements of the Task Force on behalf of adult learning via television are noteworthy: the development of the best of the telecourse catalogs; the publication of a useful book about developing and using telecourses; and a study of the relationship between community colleges and public broadcasting, among other pertinent activities.

In addition, two year colleges have joined with public broadcasting in developing instructional "wrap-arounds" for PBS series such as The Ascent of Man, The Adams Chronicles, and The Long Search. These series were developed first as general audience television programs. However, with the addition of instructional design and ancillary print materials developed by such institutions as Miami-Dade Community College District, University of California, San Diego, and Coast Community College District, these series became useful as college credit courses. Further, these courses demonstrate not only the possibilities for instructional opportunities that a broadcasting/education partnership affords, but also the enrollment potential a national distribution system brings. Although the existing

data is very imperfect, textbook sales for the Ascent of Man suggest over 43,000 college enrollments for the two national broadcasts of this series.

Two year colleges have also taken the lead in using public television to reach adults off campus. While four year institutions enrolled the majority of their telecourse students via campus closed circuit sytems--198,462 out of 261,429 in 1978-79, according to the CPB study--two year colleges gained the bulk of their enrollments through public television broadcasts--119,739 out of 185,684--during the same period. In other words, 64% of the total community/ junior college enrollment in instructional television courses came via public television broadcasts.

However, though the need for adult learning television programming and related services is clear and growing and though there has been an increasing amount of effort, time, money and creativity expended on such projects over the past decade, there has never before been a functional, national plan for effective coordination, orderly development and national distribution of a full range of formal and informal learning via television. It is toward the fulfillment of this goal that the Adult Learning Programming Department of PTV-3 intends to work. Our developing plan will combine the advantages of national delivery with the accompanying economies of scale and maintenance and quality with those of local control of choice, evaluation and credit granting.

Important to this process is the timely production of instructional materials and the timely announcement of programming and services. Institutions and stations must have ample opportunity to examine television courses and adopt, reject, or adapt them so that they serve the needs of their own constituencies. Station managers must know that the programs meet broadcasting standards, that they fit into the rest of the broadcast schedule, that they serve the needs of the local community, and that the local colleges will use the programs as a part of their adult learning schedule. Once institutions decide to participate, there must be sufficient time to work with the curricula committees, with the appropriate departments and support services, and with the particular faculty and other personnel responsible for making television serve students successfully. Further, the stations and the institutions need ample lead time to coordinate their own planning on scheduling, promotion, and other details which are important in creating successful local partnerships between post-secondary institutions and public broadcasting stations. Only planning and coordination months in advance of the broadcast dates can assure these necessities.

Planning and coordination can also serve to prevent duplication of efforts. For example, there are now three nationally distributed, interdisciplinary humanities series--all of which were in production at roughly the same time, yet there are still many subject areas for which no telecourses exist at all.

Still, national coordination calls for more than avoiding duplication of courses. Defining program rights and use policies will be an important part of the new effort. Working closely with other PBS programming services, with public broadcasting stations, and with other educational and broadcasting producers to identify those series and specials with adult learning potential and to develop the appropriate ancillary instructional materials will also be important functions. In addition, PTV-3 will work to make full use of the new techologies and the unique capabilities of PBS. Videocassette distribution and teleconferencing are already part of the operational plans. Videodisc and cable potential are under serious exploration. Because PBS has additional transponder time available, PTV-3 has an exciting opportunity to provide non-broadcast professional development opportunities, such as in-service training for telecourse teachers and station educational directors, promotion seminars for college and television public information directors, and administrative workshops in the local public television facility or at a nearby site.

In November, 1980, PTV-3, in cooperation with the Radio Television News Directors Association (RTNDA) is presenting a series of seminars for the working press. Focusing on the economy, the series will present lectures by four nationally renowned experts, each followed by a question and answer session that will allow news people from all over the country to interact with the speakers. The experience and evaluations

from these sessions will help in the design of future professional development series.

An important priority for PTV-3 now is to put the first adult learning programming schedule on the air nationwide in Fall, 1981. To accomplish this feat, we have already reviewed our plans with the PTV-3/PBS Board Committee, and established liaison with the PBS Program Managers Advisory Committee, and we will be assembling our Adult Learning Programming Advisory Council for the proposed schedule review in early November. Of course, we are also screening and evaluating program possibilities and discussing plans and potentials with public broadcasting stations, regional broadcasting associations, educational organizations, educators, producers, and funders. If we are able to keep to our projected timetable, we will announce the Fall, 1981, schedule well before Christmas this year. For most post secondary institutions and public broadcasting stations, this time line will provide an eight months' leadtime to select, adapt, prepare and integrate these offering into the plans for the Fall, 1981, season.

While we feel strongly that we want to announce our first schedule as soon as possible and that we want to provide a schedule with enough certainty, completeness, and leadtime that stations and institutions can utilize the programming and services to best advantage, we also know that offering our first schedule this quickly has some disadvantages. Even though we are consulting with as

many of the expert, interested, and affected entities as possible, we know we need a more intensive and systematic assessment of needs, selection of materials and implementation of services for future schedules. It is, in fact, to help realize these plans that we hope a strong organization of all two year colleges using and preparing to use telecourses can be formed. Consulting as we have with community college leaders and having on both our PTV-3 Board and on our Adult Learning Programming Advisory Council leaders in community college education, we have sought the best advice of the people representative of two year colleges. However, while the advice we have received is excellent, we need the breadth and the depth that only an organization composed of and devoted to the particular interests of the hundreds of community colleges using and planning to use television for adult learning can provide.

What functions would a national organization of two year colleges using television for adult learning perform? Among the most important services are these: (1) wide-ranging advice, such as curricula for various degree and certificate programs offered in part or in whole via television, priorities for course development, needs for staff traning; (2) nitty-gritty details, such as names of the appropriate contact persons to whom new schedule announcements or services should be sent, inventories of tech-

nological capabilities, and accurate figures about numbers of students enrolled in specific telecourses delivered in specific ways; (3) practical help, such as hosting regional workshops on implementation and promotion, lending expertise and talent to other colleges and sharing market research and advertising with broadcasters. Such a group might also be able to examine and to react to relevant federal legislation, as well as to accreditation regulations and state policies to gain equitable treatment for all adult learners and all institutions that use television for instruction. Such a group could provide representative sites and situations for pilot projects and case studies, such as programs interfacing businesses and community colleges, programs for the handicapped, cooperative ventures with museums and libraries. New funding sources might well be found and captured by proposals from such a group of television users. Certainly, such an organization could provide the data base for a more systematic evaluation of telecourses and the effectiveness of video, print, computer and other techniques in dealing with students; for a more in-depth investigation of faculty and student attitudes about telecourses and the effects these attitudes have on learning; and for some long range projections about needs for programming, research, and services. In truth, an organization of hundreds of community and junior colleges all using PTV-3 programming and services could do all of the above and have power, pizazz and purpose left over.

Of course, community colleges and PTV-3's Adult Learning Programming are not the only games in town. Some universities and university consortia produce telecourses for distribution beyond their walls, and more and more four year institutions are using television as a part of their outreach programs. The National University Consortium (a cooperative project of the University of Maryland and the Maryland Center for Public Broadcasting) is in its pilot year of offering mainly British Open University materials to a narrow segment of the degree seeking adult audience, and the University of Mid-America (a consortium of universities in the upper mid-west) proposes to use television courses to enroll students from all over the country in a new centrally administered, credit-granting Open University of America. In addition, several other agencies and institutions are trying to establish national distribution systems and services for some part of the adult audience: Appalachian Community Service Network (ACSN) for adults who can be reached by selected cable systems; American Education Television Network (AETN) for professional development via satellite in selected fields; and others. Furthermore, it is certainly the aim of PTV-3's Adult Learning Department to work with all the agencies and institutions of higher education--two year, four year, graduate and post graduate--to provide a full range of formal and informal educational experiences for adults. However,

if community colleges and PTV-3's Adult Learning Department are not the only games in town, they still should become one of the strongest links in a new and essential partnership between higher education and public broadcasting. That link might best be forged by an organization composed of all community and junior colleges that are either using or planning to use television as an important delivery system to accomplish their own special missions. Even a cursory comparison of a U.S. map showing the location of two year colleges and a U.S. map showing the location of PBS stations reveals the natural partnership that proximity alone dictates. Combined with the mutual interest community colleges and public broadcasting share in adult learners, the proximity seems to promise immediate success.

In fact, the opportunities are so appetizing, the challenges so exhilarating, that it is tempting to overlook the serious problems that must be solved before PTV-3, community colleges, and the nation's adult learners can achieve their mutual goals. National needs must be assessed; existing telecourses must be evaluated; the most appropriate and excellent courses must be selected and contracted for broadcast; rights must be cleared. Ways to help colleges and public broadcasting stations use adult learning materials must be created and implemented. The new technologies must be explored and used. New productions must be identified and encouraged; new ancillary materials must be developed. Funding for programs and services

must be secured. Long range goals and objectives must be set with enough firmness to make us stretch, with enough flexibility to let us succeed.

Most importantly and immediately, the public broadcasters must be convinced that commitment of a part of their open circuit air time to an adult learning schedule is in the best interests of their stations and their respective constituencies, and college communities must be convinced that television is an important delivery system for the adult learners they wish to serve. Though the effort to secure such commitment should not be minimized, neither should the potential. For out of this effort can emerge the long-awaited and truly powerful partnership between public broadcasting and higher education, a partnership that promises this nation's most exciting educational experiences for adults in the eighties.

Summary
Roundtable
November 3, 1980

Summary of Proceedings

The chair, Roger Yarrington, opened the proceedings by restating the purpose of the roundtable: (1) to assess the need for a group at the AACJC to represent the interests of telecourse users who are not themselves producers of telecourses, and (2) to recommend to the Association how such representation can best be achieved, should the participants feel it is needed. He then introduced Dr. Edmund Gleazer, AACJC president, who, after welcoming all present, called attention to the alacrity with which community colleges recognized the potential of the mass media for realizing the goals of lifelong learning. Dr. Jack Peltason, the president of the American Council on Education in whose offices the roundtable was held, added his own word of welcome and indicated his strong belief in the importance of the topic to be discussed.

The chair then introduced the public broadcasting officials present, thanked them for their assistance in underwriting the expenses of the roundtable, and asked them to speak briefly. William Reed, PBS senior vice president, and Dee Brock, the newly appointed PBS Director of Adult Learning, both underlined the need for stronger partnerships between educators and public broadcasters. They praised community colleges for their leadership in both designing and employing TV and radio-based instruction and indicated that the soon-to-be-inaugurated educational/instructional channel at PBS, the PTV3 service, will become a bridge between broadcast and postsecondary education. Dr. Peter Dirr, a member of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's education division, stated that public broadcasters recognize telecourses as additional bridges between the public broadcasting and educational communities. He also alluded to the services CPB has supplied in support of educational efforts, services which include the provision of the study materials used widely by community colleges offering as credit course series like the BBC Shakespeare plays.

The chair then requested, Dee Brock, Thomas Hobbs, and James Zigerell, authors of the background studies commissioned for the roundtable ("Producing Telecourses for National Market," "Consortium Users of Telecourse Materials," and "PTV3 and the Community College Connection") to review what they considered highlights of their papers.

A major portion of the conference was devoted to identifying and discussing the concerns of the ten institutions represented that are continuing to produce, telecourses on their own. The representatives of these institutions voiced a

number of common concerns and problems, the most prominent of which follows: (1) difficulties in reaching the audiences at whom telecourses are targeted; (2) the inadequate supply of high-production-quality courses sequenced for off-campus students in search of significant academic credentialing; (3) the lack of advance information about telecourses planned or in production and their content; (4) the barriers posed by faculty and administrators who, because of lack of acquaintance or sympathy with telecourse components and design, are reluctant to approve such courses or cooperate in adapting them to local uses.

The chair then asked the representatives of the four institutions present that are producers and designers of telecourses to express their concerns. All indicated they share a sense of frustration at the absence of a firm sense of direction and a coordinated effort at the national level. Several dwelt on the mounting costs of telecourse production that have now become so high as to be almost prohibitive for a single institution. If a supply of high-quality telecourses is to be maintained, they asserted, ways to share production costs must be found.

As the discussion proceeded and as views were exchanged around the table, there emerged a clear consensus as to the need for a national organization to address the problems and concerns of both producers and users. The public broadcasters present pointed out that in view of current developments, the PTV3 service, in particular, the formation of such a group could not be more timely. They also suggested that room should be found in it for all major producers and users, not just community colleges.

Ensuing discussion soon established the feeling of the group that it would be imprudent, for a number of reasons, to establish an agency within the Association separate from the present Task Force on Uses of Mass Media in Learning. Even though some of the participants indicated that in the past they have preceived the Task Force as producer-dominated, they still feel its goals and scope of activities could easily be broadened and modified so as to reflect and cover the interests and concerns of all community college telecourse users. The present Task Force, as was pointed out by its chairman, is concerned with users -- as its complete name indicates -- and has made significant progress in reconciling and representing the interests of both producers and users. Members of the Task Force who are producers are, after all, major users of their own -- and others' -- products.

In the views of the participants, the Task Force, as became increasing clear from the discussion, should be so restructured as to become the single AACJC agency representing the interests of telecourse users as well as producers, and should be renamed so as to indicate that its mission is a continuing one.

Recommendations

As it became apparent that there was consensus, the chair asked for formal recommendations to be passed on to the Association president. The recommendations are as follows:

There is, indeed, a need for an agency within the Association to represent the interests and special needs of the growing number of community colleges and consortia of community colleges that have incorporated telecourses and telecourse materials into their programs of instruction and community service. Roundtable participants recommend that the present Task Force on Uses of the Mass Media in Learning be reconstituted by the Association so as to become the agency representing telecourse users as well as producers. It recommends, however, that the present designation "Task Force" be dropped and the agency be designated a Consortium or Commission to signify that its objectives are continuing ones.

It is further recommended that the Executive Committee of the present Task Force, consisting of its chairman, vice chairman, and past chairman, be directed, along with the Task Force staff director, to consider immediately how the objectives and activities of the present Task Force can be expanded and modified so as to transform the Task Force into an agency that will effectively represent the interests of a broadened constituency. The committee will make detailed recommendations to the Association president shortly after January 1, 1981.

Participants also recommend that the Association use all its resources to facilitate the reconstitution of the Task Force. This includes informing the chief administrative officers of member colleges of the fee structures, membership requirements, governance procedures, and services to be provided by the expanded agency evolving from the present Task Force.

Respectfully submitted,
James Zigerell

JZ:lc
11/10/80

Roster of Participants

AACJC Roundtable

November 3, 1980

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